



## System Interconnection Agreements



Nearly all FSA systems exchange data as a core function in support of its mission. These interconnections, however, inevitably introduce new risks. FSA has a duty to maintain the confidentiality, integrity and availability of information in its custody. There is a delicate balance in exchanging information vital to a system's functionality while still maintaining the expected levels of protection for the information. One non-technical method used to protect shared data is through the use of system interconnection agreements. System interconnection agreements are a way for parties associated with the system to understand the responsibilities and expectations in regards to the system interconnection. System interconnection agreements should be completed in the designing or planning stages of the system life cycle, making any changes that arise from the agreement in the planning stages easier to incorporate than later in the system's development. These documents are useful for identifying the security controls each party should implement in order to maintain secure systems and comply with the Department's standards.

The following documents are all system interconnection agreement templates. Each is slightly different, serving a different purpose and a different audience. When creating a system interconnection with a system located outside of FSA, use the FSA Interconnection Security Agreement and the FSA Memorandum of Understanding. The FSA Interconnection Security Agreement specifies the technical and security requirements of the interconnection, while the FSA Memorandum of Understanding defines responsibilities of participating organizations.

For system interconnections between systems located within the Department of Education, use the FSA Trading Partner Agreement. The FSA Trading Partner Agreement is similar to the FSA Interconnection Security Agreement. It describes both systems and the nature of the connection. Since the interconnection is within FSA, there is a higher level of trust and an assumption that the Department's policies and procedures are followed bilaterally.

Keep the agreements related to your system in your system security folder.